

Georgia Department of Human Resources

CHILDREN AND AIDS IN GEORGIA

- From 1981 to June 30, 2002, 211 children (birth to 13 years) in Georgia were reported to have developed AIDS. Georgia has the 9th highest number of pediatric AIDS cases reported in the country.
- Babies can get HIV from their mothers during pregnancy, during delivery, after birth, and during breast feeding. This transmission method is known as perinatal transmission.
- Ninety-five percent of all children with AIDS in Georgia contracted it from their mother through perinatal transmission. Four percent contracted it through blood transfusions and blood products.
- Seventy-seven percent of all pediatric AIDS cases reported in Georgia are among African-American children.
- Of the 212 pediatric AIDS cases reported in Georgia through December 31, 2001, 53 percent of the children have died.
- HIV infection can lead to a wide range of developmental problems and affect many vital organs in infants because of their immature immune and nervous systems.

Prevention advice:

- Women who are considering pregnancy or who are already pregnant need to know their own HIV status and the status of their partner. HIV counseling and voluntary testing is the standard of care in Georgia.
- If a woman is pregnant, she can get tested for HIV by her physician or by her county health department or family planning clinic. If she is HIV positive, there is medical treatment and counseling available to maintain her health and the health of her baby. If she receives appropriate therapy during pregnancy and delivery, and if the infant receives it after birth, the chances of the infant becoming HIV infected are drastically reduced.
- After delivery, an HIV-infected mother needs to find a pediatrician familiar with pediatric HIV treatment, and she needs to arrange for her long-term medical care and get advice on effective methods of safer sex and contraception from her doctor or the county health department.